

LANDSCAPE SPECIAL

The importance of landscape as a record of the past is finally being recognized by government and planning departments.

In a landmark case in Berkshire this summer, three large-scale housing proposals were rejected because they did not fit in with the historic character of the landscape (British Archaeology, October Issue).

In order to assist planning departments to be more informed about the character of the historic landscape, English Heritage have been asked by government to create a register of historic landscapes covering the whole country. At Kendal Museum last month the assistant archaeologist for Cumbria, Helena Smith, introduced the project as it is soon to be implemented for Cumbria.

The Historic Landscape Characterization Project will result in the production of a map for the county which will describe the character of the landscape in each area. It is expected that the work will take two years and will involve combining all known information for the county relating to the landscape into a single record. The map will be held in a computer and hopefully be made available to the public in its final form. This will assist planners to

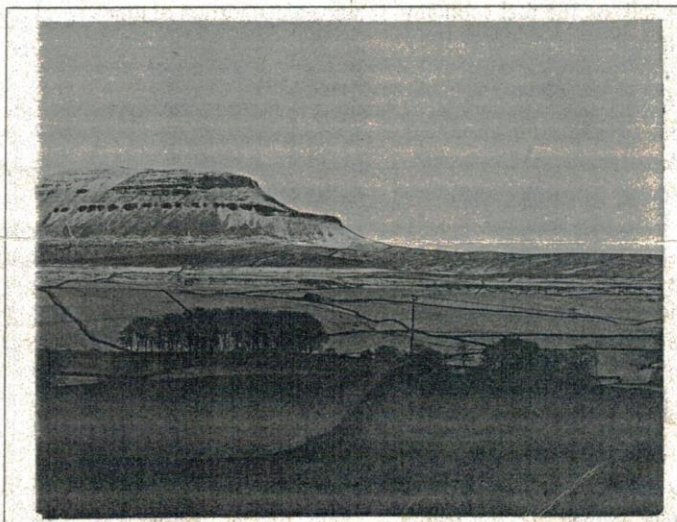
make informed decisions concerning the pattern of the historic landscape when looking at planning developments in the county.

For the next few months our events will be based around the subject of 'Landscape and Archaeology'. Archaeologists are becoming more aware of the importance of looking at archaeological sites in the context of the surrounding landscape. Landscape archaeology is fast becoming one of the most popular aspects of archaeology. New journals and courses are appearing with the landscape as their focus

and there is a lot of discussion about how we can recognize and preserve the historic landscape within professional organizations.

We have lost a great deal of our archaeological heritage due to ignorance and hasty developments for short-term gain. This new focus on the landscape can only help in preserving the past around us and the countryside we know and love.

Martin Railton



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The Society for Landscape Studies Annual Conference LANDSCAPES OF THE NORTH WEST

The society for landscape studies is a national society and held its annual conference at Lancaster University on 28th October in conjunction with the Centre for North-West Regional Studies.

The conference began with a look at prehistoric landscape with Jamie Quartermain from the Lancaster University Unit. He explained how the marginal landscapes of West Cumbria are some of the best preserved prehistoric agricultural landscapes in Northern England. Bronze age farmers have left the legacy of cairnfields on the higher lands of the Lake District due to early stone clearance for pastoral farming. These were later amalgamated to create some of Cumbria's earliest fields.

Angus Winchester followed with a talk on the fuel economy and landscape in North-West England. He argued that by the later Middle Ages woodland resources became a jealously guarded resource resulting in the widespread use of peat as a fuel. Each farm was assigned its own 'peat plot where peat could be cut at certain times of the year. He tried to isolate landscape evidence for this in the form of 'peat scales' or 'peat cotes', the huts where peat was stored for winter use.

The evidence of place-names was examined by Mary Higham in a talk entitled 'Take it with a Pinch of Salt: A Look at North-West Salters'. She argued that the place-names 'Salt' and

'Salter' have little to do with the production and transport of salt as has commonly been thought. In fact these names appear to relate to the rearing of deer in parks or upland enclosures. Documentary evidence refers to the construction of *saltatorii* or deer leaps used to control the movement of deer. She tried to show landscape evidence for these constructions close to known deer parks, although it was clear that more field work was needed to confirm their existence.

The evidence for parliamentary enclosure was examined by Ian Whyte with particular reference to the enclosure of common land in the Upper Eden valley and around Appleby. This was particularly interesting to those of us who inhabit these parts. He explained that Cumbria had the highest proportion of unenclosed upland waste of any English region in the eighteenth and experienced a high degree of enclosure of these lands. There were over 50 enclosure awards between the 1770s and 1890s in the Upper Eden and Lune valleys. Much of this activity was concentrated in three distinct phases during the 1770s, the Napoleonic Wars and the mid-nineteenth centuries. One of the earliest enclosures was at Crackenthorpe and it may have proved to be the model for later enclosure in the area.

Two further lectures concentrated on perceptions of the landscape in the past and on social customs concerning common

land. A student at Lancaster University, Sue Owe shared her research into the diaries of nineteenth century writers in the Lake District showing how we create our own personal landscapes of perception.

Andrew Humphries outlined the basis of common land tenure in the past and argued that commoners rights are not understood by those in charge of rural policy today.

The conference closed with a talk by John Hodgeson, the Lake District National Park archaeologist, on survey work undertaken by the LDNPA to study the landscape in the Lakes. He also outlined the Historic Landscape Characterization Project which is to be run jointly between the LDNPA and Cumbria County Council starting in November. This generated a lot of questions and debate which will only really be resolved once the project is underway.

It was a very varied conference demonstrating that there are many approaches to the study of the landscape. Archaeology is one of array of techniques which can shed light on the landscapes of the past.

Martin Railton

The Society for Landscape Studies produces an annual journal, *Landscape History*, and holds the annual conference along with a field excursion.

Visit them at:

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/cba/sls/>

EVENTS DIARY:

AGM and Member's Evening

Tues 9th January 2001 6.30pm

Our Third Annual General Meeting will take place at Appleby Grammar School starting at 6.30pm.

This will be followed by our Member's Evening which will include two talks by members of Appleby Archaeology on their chosen topics. The member's evening will begin at 7.00pm and be followed by a raffle. The evening closes at 9.00pm.

A copy of the minutes from the last AGM are included with this newsletter. Please read them before the meeting.

TALKS

If you feel you would like to give a talk to the group on a favorite subject please contact Martin Railton on 017683 61633 as soon as possible. The talk needs to be half an hour in length (including time for questions) and be about some aspect of archaeology or local history.

RAFFLE

Any offers of raffle prizes would be gratefully accepted. The raffle provides a much-needed boost to group funds. If you can offer a prize then please contact our secretary or bring it along at the start of the AGM. Ring Phyllis Rouston on 017683 53463.

LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGY



LANDSCAPE HISTORY

Tuesday 5th December 7.00pm

The history of the Landscape will be explored by Richard Hazelhurst in his talk in December. He will be sharing his ideas about how the landscape had developed to become the way it is today.

LANDSCAPES AND DOCUMENTS

Saturday 20th January 2001

The Centre for North-West Regional Studies at Lancaster University is holding a day of lectures on the subject of Landscape and Documents. The tutor Dr Alan Crosby will be demonstrating how we can use old documents as a source of information on earlier landscapes.

The cost for the day is £13. Contact the centre on 01524 593770.



FIELD NAMES AND FIELD SHAPES

Tuesday 6th February 7.00pm

Mary Atkin has been researching the names and shapes of fields in Cumbria. These can give us clues as to when and how fields were created. In this talk Mary will give examples of field names and shapes in Westmorland.

Meetings are currently being held upstairs in Room 5/6 at the Appleby Grammar School between 7.00 and 9.00pm.

Talks are free of charge to members of Appleby Archaeology Group. Non-members are very welcome (£1.50 contribution).

NEW MEMBERS

The following are new members of Appleby Archaeology Group:

Jennifer Abbott, Hilton, Appleby
Christine and David Bailey, Penrith
Helen Jones, Aylesbury (and Orton)
Merrilyn Sawrey-Cookson, Newbiggin
Nick and Andy Swinscoe, Appleby

and leaving us are:

Rob and Ruth Miles, Maulds Meaburn
who have moved to Whithorn.

GEOPHYSICS AND OLD CARLISLE

A Talk by Jan Walker

On Tuesday October 3rd the first talk of the third year of the Appleby Archaeology Group took place. The title of the talk was Geophysics and Old Carlisle.

Jan Walker, an archaeologist who now teaches, began by telling us that following a series of classes her students had expressed a wish to pursue their interest in Archaeology, and how with the support of the late Prof Barry Jones of Manchester University this had resulted in the formation of an archaeology support group, amateurs who help professionals with projects in this region.

She mentioned a number of sites where the support group had helped and referred in more detail to two major projects, the discovery of a township outside the Roman Fort at Old Carlisle and more recently a project with Timescape to investigate a township outside the Roman Fort at Maryport.

Jan explained that the support group concentrated on examining sites without resort to digging. She then described the methods that were used, field walking, aerial photography and geophysics.

Field walking is the systematic recovery and recording of artefacts found on the surface of ploughed fields. Artefacts may include pottery, flints and coins. The distribution of these is carefully recorded as this may give an indication of past activities. Jan had brought a number of pieces of pottery, which included Saxon, Roman and Medieval examples, for the group to examine.

Aerial photography and the mass of information that can be gleaned from it was discussed. Crops grow more vigorously where there has been a ditch and much less vigorously over stone, these differences are visible as crop marks on photographs. Photographs taken at an oblique angle show shadows for example shadows from bank can be seen. In Cumbria many Iron Age circular settlements and field systems have been seen and of course much evidence of Roman activity.

Two geophysical techniques were explained, one uses a resistivity meter which measure electrical resistance in the ground, high resistance suggests the presence of buildings and low the presence of ditches; the other uses a mag-

netometer which measures variations in the soil's magnetic characteristics. In each case the ground is systematically scanned and the results recorded. There are several software programmes that can be used to interpret the findings to provide "pictures" of what lies beneath the ground.

These methods are employed where sites have been located or are suspected. Old maps records and ordinance survey maps may provide the initial information.

The second part of the evening provided the group with the opportunity to ask questions, to handle the pieces of pottery, and to look at aerial photographs and the results of the geophysical studies at Old Carlisle and Maryport.

All present were intrigued to see how much information was available houses, roads and larger buildings can be identified and in one photograph there was the suggestion of a Roman harbour on the Solway. All seen without resort to digging!

Phyllis Rouston



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Eden Historic Landscape Project Report No.1

Prehistoric Earthworks at Brackenthwaite

A mysterious bank underlies the existing field system at Brackenthwaite Farm near Appleby. What was it for and where does it lead? These were the questions that led members of the group to investigate the area on a windy day last summer.

Brackenthwaite Farm

Brackenthwaite means 'clearing with bracken' in Old Scandinavian. However, apart from the bracken, there is little evidence for Scandinavian occupation. The earliest map showing the farm in its present form dates to 1848 and illustrates a field system little changed from today. Brackenthwaite is also mentioned in the Inclosure Award of 1774 though there is no clear record of field boundaries relating to that time.

Beneath the present field system is an earthen bank. In places the stone walls run on top of it but immediately behind Brackenthwaite farm the bank runs diagonally across the present field system. It is preserved to a better extent in some fields than in others where it was clearly considered a nuisance by farmers in the past. In two fields the bank has been ploughed out and barely survives as a mark in the pasture. In others it has survived well and can be seen clearly as a linear bank flanked by two ditches, one on each side.

Field Survey

The aim of the survey was to record the extent of the earthwork and plot its position on an OS map. We were able to show that the bank survives in some form for approximately two and a half kilometers. The map below shows the extent of the bank which runs from Keisley Beck at one end, to a point marked **D** on the map close to Murton Beck (The dashed line at **C** marks the area of the bank which has been largely destroyed. **B** marks the position of Brackenthwaite Farm).

The bank is constructed from boulder clay and stands 110cm high

in places and is 330cm wide at its base. The ditches have filled up over time and are visible only in a few locations along its length. The bank has been severely eroded and has been cut through in recent times to provide access into the present fields. In one small field at Shepherds Cottage the bank was completely demolished so that no trace of it survived. Caused, it seems, by the owner keeping pigs in the field.

At point **D** the bank came to an end and no further trace of it could be found. However at this point, where the bank meets the Murton beck, there is a high bank on the far side of the stream. It appears that the natural landscape was used as a continuation of the earthwork, forming an effective boundary along the beck side. This natural bank continues along the beck until it meets Swine Gill. This stream runs below Castle Hill settlement where it meets up with Kiesley Beck, close to where the earthwork bank begins. Could these natural stream banks form the other side of a large enclosure?

Prehistoric Settlement

Castle Hill settlement (NY702230) is a fine example of a defended farmstead of the Iron Age or Romano-British period, perhaps some 2,000 year old or more. The stone foundations of circular huts are

clearly visible as are the substantial banks and ditch enclosing the site(**A**). It occupies a prominent location on a spur of land above Flakebridge wood and would once have commanded a clear view of the land below. The area outlined by the earth bank would have been clearly visible from this vantage point. In the absence of other evidence it seems likely that the bank is associated with this settlement.

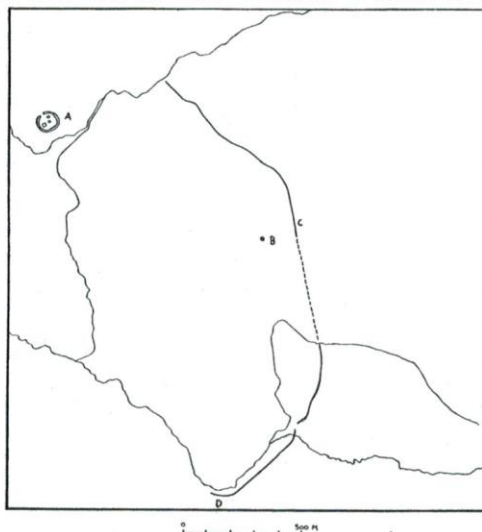
Similar systems are known elsewhere in the Eden Valley where these earth banks are known as 'dykes'. At Waitby and Crosby Garrett linear banks have been identified up to five kilometers long associated with rectilinear field systems and unenclosed settlements dated to the Roman period. There is also evidence for the use of a number of steeply banked streams as natural boundaries which supplement the constructed dyke system. In some areas the combination of natural and constructed boundary features allows us to construct a complete picture of prehistoric land use including settlements, small fields and large scale enclosures.

Conclusions

It seems likely that at Brackenthwaite we can identify as similar system to those identified at Waitby and Crosby Garrett with a large area having been enclosed by the prehistoric inhabitants of Castle hill settlement. We have identified half of the enclosure as an earth bank and it is feasible that the other half was bounded by the high sided stream banks that delineate a large area within view of the settlement. Although we have not dated the bank, by association with the settlement it is either late Iron Age or Romano British in origin.

Purpose

The dyke could have been purely a territorial boundary delineating the area under the control of the settlement. Equally it could form part of the agricultural landscape of these prehistoric farmers. The bank may have enclosed an area of pasture used for grazing stock in the winter. It would serve not only to keep animals safe within the enclosure, but could feasibly have been used to keep them out during the summer months, allowing the land to recover for the next winter's grazing.



Map of Castle Hill settlement and Brackenthwaite Dyke